

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
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R 141411Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4857
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY SANA

S E C R E T ADDIS ABABA 4293

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, PBOR, ET, SO, SU
SUBJECT: ETHIOPIAN/SUDANESE AND ETHIOPIAN/SOMALI RELATIONS

1. FROM VARIETY OF SOURCES PRESENT AT RWANDAN NATIONAL DAY
RECEPTION JULY 13, FOLLOWING ITEMS EMERGED RE PRESENT STATUS
ETHIOPIAN-SUDANESE AND ETHIOPIAN-SOMALI RELATIONS:

A. SEVERAL AMBASSADORS REPORTED THAT MENGISTU SUMMONED
EAST EUROPEAN AMBASSADORS AFTERNOON JULY 12. PURPOSE OF
MEETING IS AS YET VAGUE, BUT APPARENTLY MENGISTU CONFIRMED
TO THEM FALL OF KEREN AT HANDS OF PLF AND HIS CONCERN ABOUT
CURRENT STATE OF EVENTS IN BOTH ERITREA AND OGADEN. WHETHER
HE THEN ASKED FOR ADDITIONAL HELP IS NOT APPARENT (EASTERN
EUROPEANS WOULD NOT COMMENT), ALTHOUGH SOME AMBASSADORS
SPECULATED THIS WAS IN FACT PURPOSE OF MEETING. ITALIAN
AMBASSADOR LATER TRIED DRAW OUT SOVIET FOR OVER AN HOUR,
WITHOUT SUCCESS.

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B. IN DISCUSSION WITH BERHANU DINKA, CHIEF AFRICAN
DIVISION MOFA, IN MY PRESENCE, EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR MADE
FLAT STATEMENTS TO BERHANU THAT ETHIOPIA CONSIDERED ITSELF
"AT WAR" WITH SOMALIA, AND THAT SOMALI REGULAR FORCES
WERE ON ETHIOPIAN SOIL (NOT STATED WHETHER AS UNITS OR AS
INDIVIDUALS). BERHANU COMMENTED AFFIRMATIVELY TO BOTH
STATEMENTS BUT DID NOT ELABORATE.

C. CAMEROONIAN AMBASSADOR DICKO TOLD ME THAT OAU SUDAN/ETHIOPIA COMMITTEE FORMED AT LIBREVILLE SUMMIT WOULD MEET IN APPROXIMATELY TWO WEEKS AT DIRECTION OF PRESIDENT BONGO. VENUE NOT YET DECIDED. DICKO SAID BOTH SIDES APPEARED WILLING LET COMMITTEE HAVE CHANCE AND HIS OWN PERSONAL APPROACH WILL BE TO TRY AND GET BOTH OF THEM TO LOWER LEVEL OF PUBLIC CHARGES AND COUNTER-CHARGES AS FIRST STEP. (HE WILL BE CAMEROONIAN REP ON COMMITTEE.) IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION BERHANU DINKA TOLD ME HE SAW SOME SIGNS OF POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENT IN ETHIOPIAN RELATIONS WITH SUDAN. HE CONFIRMED THAT ETHIOPIA WAS WILLING LET COMMITTEE SEE WHAT IT COULD DO, BUT ADDED THAT ETHIOPIA HAD PLACED CONDITION ON ITS ACCEPTANCE, I.E., THAT NIMEIRI REFRAIN FROM ANY FURTHER PERSONAL ATTACKS ON ETHIOPIA (WHETHER ETHIOPIA WOULD IN THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES COOPERATE WITH COMMITTEE WAS NOT CLEAR, NOR WAS IT CLEAR THAT THIS HAD BEEN PASSED ON TO SUDANESE).

D. RAILROAD BRIDGE SOMEWHERE BETWEEN AWASH STATION AND DIRE DAWA WAS KNOCKED OUT EITHER JULY 12 OR 13 FOR SECOND TIME, ACCORDING ONE SOURCE. SAME SOURCE MAINTAINED TROOP TRAIN WAS TRAPPED BETWEEN BRIDGE AND DIRE DAWA BUT THAT ATTACK WAS NOT DIRECTED AT TRAIN.

E. MANY CHIEFS OF MISSION WERE SPECULATING ON
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IMPLICATIONS OF FALL OF KEREN WHICH APPEARS FROM WHAT LITTLE INFORMATION AVAILABLE HERE TO HAVE BEEN QUICK AND WITHOUT MUCH RESISTANCE DESPITE ALLEGED PRESENCE OF 7000 TROOPS (SUNA IN KHARTOUM IS REPORTING 3000). IN SEPARATE CONVERSATIONS JULY 12 WITH ITALIAN AMBASSADOR AND WITH ME (WE COMPARED NOTES LATER), SOVIET AMBASSADOR SEEMED PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT LACK OF "COMBATIVE SPIRIT" IN ETHIOPIAN ARMY AND ABOUT FALL OF KEREN. HE IN FACT TOLD ITALIAN AMBASSADOR THAT ARMY WAS COMPOSED OF "MERCENARIES" WHO DREW PAY BUT WERE WITHOUT ANY PARTICULAR MOTIVATION. WHILE AVOIDING DIRECT REPLY TO ITALIAN AMB'S QUESTION ABOUT ADDITIONAL MILITARY HELP FOR ARMY, HE DID RHETORICALLY MUSE ABOUT WHY ARMY SHOULD GET ARMS IF THEY WON'T FIGHT AND THEN TALKED ABOUT VIRTUES OF MILITIA.

2. IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION JULY 14, ITALIAN AMBASSADOR SAID ASMARA WAS QUIET AT PRESENT (FORMER ASMARA FSL CONFIRMED) AS WAS DIRE DAWA, AND THAT REPORTS HARAR WAS "IN FLAMES" THAT HAVE BEEN CIRCULATING RECENTLY WERE UNTRUE AS LATE AS JULY 11. ITALIAN SAID SOME OF HIS NATIONALS IN ASMARA HAD LEFT BUT MOST WERE STILL THERE. HE HAD BEEN TOTALLY UNSUCCESSFUL IN PERSUADING HIS

COMMUNITY OF ABOUT 100 IN DIRE DAWA TO MOVE.
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